**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, August 16, 2018**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, August 16, 2018 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, and Commissioner Jamie Metsch. Commissioner Robin Seidel and Commissioner Lt. Robert Preczewski were absent. Acting Director Nicholas Downing was also present.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm. Acting Director Downing noted audio of the meeting was being recorded to assist with notes.

Chair Stepasiuk noted Commissioner Seidel’s absence, and asked if Lt. Preczewski is still on the Commission, despite his approaching retirement. Acting Director Downing answered that his membership has not been changed, and Chief Butler has not decided who will be her designee on the Commission to serve in Lt. Preczewski’s place.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bill Geary, 49 Liberty Hill Avenue, two doors down form the Bates School. Saw surveyors in front of the school in the spring, and wanted to keep an eye on it, so is attending to learn more about the project.

Linda Stark, 11 Church Street, asked about the Museum Place Garage. Ms. Stark called yesterday about a number of lights out on the roof, and would also like an update on some of the issues raised at the last Commission meeting. Acting Director Downing responded that he is working with Assistant Director Sullaway on short-, middle- and long-term maintenance projects, and he is soliciting bids for painting in the garage of spaces, centerlines, and arrows, and the hope is to have the painting and lights replaced before October.

Joyce Kenney, 285 Lafayette Street, noted that at the corner of Ocean Ave and Lafayette Street, the crosswalks are in need of repainting. Acting Director Downing responded that he had already identified those crosswalks as needing work and sent along the information to DPS. Ms. Kenney further noted that Ocean Avenue will be reconstructed and she has some concerns about work beginning before 7:00am, as has happened previously. Assistant Director Downing noted that if that happens again, she should contact the Department, DPS< or the Mayor’s office.

**NEW / OLD BUSINESS**

* Bates Elementary Safe Routes to School Project

Acting Director Downing gave a brief overview of the project. Had been initiated some time ago, and the Safe Routes to School program had been quiet for some time as state funding for the program was in question, but the program is moving forward again and the City received the design from MassHighway for our review. The project begins at the intersection of Liberty Hill and Appleton heading toward Bates Elementary School. The major aspects of the project are at that intersection, with substantial curb extensions to shorten the crossing distances. The sidewalks are just on one side as there is no sidewalk on the side of Liberty Hill opposite Bates Elementary. There are also curb extensions at the intersection of Liberty Hill and Nursery Street, and a new ADA compliant crossing connecting the paths through Greenlawn Cemetery to Bates Elementary. Overall the project does a good job of shortening the crossing distances at Appleton and Liberty Hill, but this is a chance for the Commission to review if there are other changes we should seek.

Vice Chair Papetti commented that he is very familiar with the area and that the improvement is very much needed. The turn from Appleton to Liberty Hill is a very high speed turn right now. Overall, we need more information on this, as the proposal is not necessarily the best choice – squaring off Appleton could shorten the crossing distances further, for example. We need more details and to see what alternatives were considered. We had asked for information much earlier on and did not receive it.

Chair Stepasiuk agreed with Vice-Chair Papetti’s comments, and noted her continued frustration that this is another example of a project not coming before the Commission until it is well down the road to completion.

There was a general consensus among the Commission to see the alternative designs that were considered before this design was finalized, and if alternatives were not considered, then to ask to see alternative designs that would do more to shorten the crossing distances further. Vice Chair Papetti added that at the other end of the project, he really supports the connection to the cemetery, but then north of the school, the connection to the Kernwood bridge has enough right of way for a shared use path and that should be considered. Also, at the intersection, we should really work to shorten the crossings so a Bates student can navigate it safely on their own.

Acting Director Downing will compile these comments to share with MassHighway and ask the item be added to next week’s Bike Advisory Committee meeting. Chair Stepasiuk added that having city/state staff involved in the project attend these meetings to present would be helpful.

* October Parking Concerns for Downtown Residents

Acting Director Downing noted that this item is related to the conversation we had at the last meeting with downtown residents. Residents of the Derby Lofts building purchase 81 South Harbor Garage passes, and residents from a mix of condo buildings, but primarily 11 Church Street/Essex Condos, purchase 181 Museum Place Garage passes, for a total of 260+ passes. These residents are the ones who have difficulty in October. Acting Director Downing added that the passes guarantee access to the garage if a space is available, but not a guaranteed space.

Vice Chair Papetti asked for confirmation about the requirement to purchase these passes. Ms. Stark noted that even if you do not own a car, per the deed agreement, you are still required to purchase the pass. Vice Chair Papetti asked further, do all those passes get used, and how often? Acting Director Downing is working on getting that data now, but takes longer to gather.

Acting Director Downing explained the map the Commission is looking at showing (1) October resident parking by ordinance, (2) October resident parking by order, and (3) regular, year-round resident parking. This shows all of the protected resident parking in October, and Chair Stepasiuk noted many of the other roads in the area are metered. She added further that while we don’t know exactly what the utilization is, she expects a fair number of these residents will still end up in the garage, and so doesn’t assume we would be putting 200+ cars onto any of these streets.

Acting Director Downing proposed as an option a system where residents, if upon reaching the garage are told it is full, would receive a one-day hang tag that would allow them to park in certain resident restricted areas. We have parking office staff at the garage already, and they could administer this. Chair Stepasiuk commented that this system sounds too complicated.

Vice Chair Papetti asked if this could be implemented without an ordinance change. Acting Director Downing responded that it would likely be included in the October parking order that sets the non-ordinance resident parking streets.

Vice Chair Papetti asked if we did a hang tag system what zone would those tags be good for? Acting Director Downing responded that regardless of the system of the hang tag, the next question is where would these residents potentially be able to park. Residents that get October parking do not get to park anywhere within a zone, they get to park on their street, so we would need to determine where these residents could park.

Chair Stepasiuk asked who gets to park on the Common? Acting Director Downing responded that any resident with a Washington Square address would get to park there, and Commissioner Metsch added that in his experience as a nearby resident, there is usually ample parking available on the Common. Commissioner Metsch noted some concerns about how to draw an appropriate zone for where these residents could park and also asked about the use of the Church Street West Lot being free for Salem residents. Acting Director Downing clarified that residents can park there for free, but it is not exclusively for Salem residents.

Vice Chair Papetti commented that we should consider the crescent city lot at the MBTA, as it is very underutilized, even in October, and the MBTA garage has capacity as well. It isn’t ideal, but it is an option. Chair Stepasiuk added that she wants to see a system that provides as many options as possible because it is so hard for these residents who pay for passes and have to buy them to park in October.

There was a general discussion about identifying locations that have some parking supply that could be used, and a general consensus that making any system as simple as possible should be the goal. The city-owned lot at the MBTA and Washington Square were agreed to be good options. There was discussion about the system of how to get a pass, and whether residents should have to go to the garage first to get a special hang tag. There was general agreement that whatever happens this October will likely not be the long-term solution.

Acting Director Downing proposed that he will draft a proposed system that will outline the process for a passholder to get a special hang tag and where that hang tag allows a passholder to park to be discussed at the September 6 meeting.

* Lafayette/Loring/West Striping Plan

Acting Director Downing gave a brief overview of the project. Much of the work has been done, but the striping plan has not been implemented. Vice Chair Papetti had asked for information on this repeatedly, but did not receive it. Vice-Chair Papetti provided further background that comments were provided by the Bike Advisory Committee to the Engineering Department in January/February 2017. Laster that year, Vice Chair Papetti noticed that what went out to bid was not reflective of the comments provided at all. The project has progressed, so now the opportunity is limited to comment on the striping plan. This is the City’s first Complete Street Award, so it should be a showcase of everything we can do for multimodal transportation. He also asked it be added to the Bike Advisory Committee meeting next week to comment on the striping plan as well. The current striping plan is not reflective of any comments from the Bike Committee.

There was a general discussion about what changes should be made to the proposed striping plan, including adding a bike lane on the northbound side of Loring, bike boxes throughout the intersection for turning movements, a parking protected bike lane southbound on Lafayette, concurrent signals for pedestrians, and potentially a dashed bike lane at the bus stop on the southbound lane of Loring. Acting Director Downing agreed to share these general comments with the Engineering department, and also recommend that the Bike Advisory Committee be consulted on specific recommendations.

* MBTA Bus Stop location on Washington Street

Acting Director Downing presented proposed ordinance language to move an MBTA bus stop as recommended by the MBTA. The bus stop is now on Washington Street on the easterly side, north of the intersection with Federal Street. The preferred location is on the easterly side, north of the intersection with Church Street. This will require moving 3 metered parking spaces. The ordinance language would repeal 2 bus stops that are on the books but not being used. To add a bus stop, we don’t need to pass an ordinance change per Section 62 of Article V, but we do need to extended the parking meter zone so we can put the 3 meter spaces we are losing for the new bus stop location where the current bus stop is located. Acting Director Downing noted that he will include information in what his sent to the Council to explain that his change is being implemented to accommodate a new bus stop location. Acting Director Downing will also confirm that the change of these spaces would not affect the proposed Washington Street striping.

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Metsch, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to Council the following:

**An Ordinance**

***Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Salem, as follows:***

**Section 1.** Section 11 of Article I be amended by repealing the following:

Washington Street – Bus Stops – easterly side, from a point beginning on the southerly side of Federal Street and Washington Street and proceeding thirty (30) feet in a southerly direction.

Washington Street – Bus Stops – easterly side, from a point beginning twenty (20) feet from the southerly side of Federal Street in a southerly direction to a point located twenty (20) feet from the northerly side of Church Street.

**Section 2.** Section 56 of Article V be amended by replacing the following:

Washington Street – Parking Meter Zones Established – easterly side, from Church Street to Essex Street. Four (4) hour parking.

With-:

Washington Street – Parking Meter Zones Established – easterly side, from a point beginning sixty (60) feet north of Federal Street to Essex Street. Four (4) hour parking.

* Clifton Avenue

Acting Director Downing provided an update on the proposed striping plan for Clifton Avenue. The Commission cannot deliberate or discuss the item as it was not on their agenda, but Acting Director Downing wanted to provide a clarification as to what happened. There was confusion from residents, the contractor, and the Ward Councillor as to what the striping plan would do in terms of parking. The slight modification to the plan is a shifting of the centerline south by a foot to make sure there is enough room on the northerly side for parking and a travel lane with sharrows and a travel lane with parking and a bike on the southerly side, except for a short stretch where parking will need to be removed.

Vice Chair Papetti requested that for any future project, if a project moves along before the Commission can review, that staff email the Commission to explain the situation and provide potentially a chance for an informal working group to provide feedback on the project.

Chair Stepasiuk asked that staff work to update the LTIP and have other city staff attend the Commission regularly to provide updates on projects.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

The Commission agreed to delay voting on minutes approval until their September 6 to give members time to review. Vice Chair Papetti recommended that staff pursue hiring a clerk to assist with minutes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Metsch, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm.